

country. The government wanted that bill. They wanted it then. They urged it was important because of pending decisions.

I disagreed, and so did my colleague Senator Joyal. Together, with other colleagues in this chamber, we kept that debate going for several months, but finally we succumbed to our leadership and to government pressure. Senator Joyal and I decided to make our arguments in the Senate at third reading as if we were arguing before the Supreme Court of Canada because we felt that that bill would be ultimately challenged and would be shown to be unconstitutional. We sent the Senate Hansard, a public document, to all the judges of the Supreme Court, and we were so pleased over a year later when the Supreme Court of Canada upheld our major arguments.

I remember another important debate on a resolution introduced in the other place declaring Quebec "a distinct society." The government introduced that resolution here shortly after the referendum. I angered my colleagues on this side, I angered the Prime Minister, I angered the leader of the Senate, my great friend Allan MacEachen, and other colleagues on this side, when I refused to support that resolution. I gave the shortest speech I have ever given in the Senate, and I repeat it here now: Canada is a distinct society. All the rest is commentary.

While Quebecers are different, so are Newfoundlanders, so are Acadians, so are hundreds and hundreds of Aboriginal tribes and many other groups in Canada. Honourable senators, I believed then and I believe now in one Canada, bilingual and multicultural—one Canada.

One of my most stimulating periods was as chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce with Senator Angus as my congenial deputy chairman. Together, with a total consensus of all members on both sides, we did a number of important, sharp and pointed studies dealing with consumer protection of the financial securities sector, the volunteer and charitable sector, the demographic time bomb, stemming the flow of illicit money to Canada and others.

Hopefully the work we commenced on hedge funds and derivatives, started well before the last financial meltdown, and the work on reducing interprovincial trade barriers to make Canada one dynamic competitive marketplace will be completed by others in the Senate. Being a Canadian senator offers unique opportunities to travel and to participate in international affairs. One of my most satisfying experiences has been as co-chairman of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group. I was elected to that office by members of Parliament in both houses for eight successive terms and served for over 16 years in that position.

The Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group was founded in 1959 and recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. During my term in office, with the support of colleagues on all sides, bipartisan, we transformed that organization from one annual meeting with the Americans to an active, vigorous advocacy group meeting with state legislators, governors in every corner of America, in addition to regular meetings on Capitol Hill in Washington with congressmen and senators to advocate one thing, Canada's interest. We learned that all politics is local, and so we have to work at the local level in the United States, and hence our meeting with state officials and governors. All problems in the United States affecting Canada start at the local level and, if detected early enough, can be diluted if not resolved.

After each meeting, honourable senators, as I will do later today, we tabled a complete report of our activities to the Senate to en-

sure that the senators who were interested could benefit from our experience. We were not there to represent ourselves. We were there to represent Canada, and that is why we tabled these reports. I want to thank my current co-chair in the house, Gord Brown, and my current American co-chairs, Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota and Congressman James Oberstar of Minnesota, who is the only member of our group who has served the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group longer than I.

When I first came to the Senate, I was able to travel to a number of international organizations consistent with my work on the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, where I and my colleague Senator Stollery have been the longest serving members. I decided that I would focus my activities where Canada and the United States both had a vote, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, which flowed out of the Helsinki Accord in 1974, currently with 56 member states from Vladivostok to Vancouver.

There I became an active member on the executive and served as an elected member for 15 years. This organization is the largest parliamentary assembly dedicated to human rights, economic rights and democratic rights in the world. I became a witness to history serving as one of the heads of election monitoring in Russia, Ukraine during the Orange Revolution, Georgia during the Rose Revolution and on the Independence Referendum for Montenegro and many others. Senator Di Nino has also served on a number of those committees with great skill and expertise.

I learned how precious democracy is and how important democracy building is for the future of the world. I worked closely with elected presidents of the assembly, and I want to pay special tribute to two recent presidents: Congressman Alcee Hastings of Florida and João Soares, the head of the Portuguese Delegation and current Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, who have done outstanding work travelling the length and breadth of the OSCE space. We have become great personal friends.

A sparkplug in this organization, which is headquartered in Copenhagen, is Spencer Oliver, the long-serving Secretary General, who is the most brilliant and knowledgeable American I have ever met, with a deep and penetrating insight into foreign affairs. He has become one of my closest friends in public life. While at the OSCE PA, I served as leader of the Liberal group there, and I finally resigned this year after 12 years. They elected me as Liberal Leader Emeritus Perpetual, a title I will cherish all my life. I do not kid myself: I achieved these offices overseas because I was Canadian, because the world respects Canada and Canadians who represent Canada.

I think the Senate should have a brief explanation, particularly those senators who have been mildly critical of the numerous OSCE resolutions combating anti-Semitism on the Order Paper that I tabled and that are still on the Order Paper. Why those many resolutions? After the Berlin Wall came down in 1989—and I was in Germany before and after the wall came down—I thought I would finally close my dossier on anti-Semitism. There was hope for a new world order. But it was not to be. The UN had passed an invidious resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Anti-Semitism was on the rise not only across the face of the earth and around the globe, not only across Europe, but also in South America and in Canada. In 1994, a diligent congressman from New Jersey, Chris

Smith, approached me to work on a resolution to combat anti-Semitism and to present it to the OSCE parliamentary assembly annual meeting. I agreed. We were joined by Congressman Steny Hoyer, now the majority leader of the Congress and one the most powerful men in the United States, a good friend; Congressman Alcee Hastings; Congressman Ben Cardin, now a senator from Maryland; Gert Weisskirchen of the German Parliament and parliamentarians from Italy, France, Austria, Ukraine, Poland and others.

That first resolution was passed by a bare majority. Thereafter, across the face of Europe, in Copenhagen, twice in Berlin, Oporto, Cordoba, Rotterdam, Edinburgh, Vienna, London, Rome, St. Petersburg, Kazakhstan, Madrid, Washington and so forth, we continued the thrust of those resolutions, parliamentary, ministerial and side meetings.

There were two chilly experiences. I spoke on these resolutions in the Berlin Reichstag at the very podium where Hitler had declared the Nuremberg Laws in 1933. I spoke in the Hofberg Palace at the very same place in Vienna where Hitler announced the Anschluss between Germany and Austria in 1938 that most historians agree ignited World War II. This work continued, meeting after meeting, and finally, honourable senators, I brought one of these resolutions to the Senate in 2002. It was passed in 2004 and was referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights. That committee held meetings for a day or so, and then, without explanation, decided not to complete its work.

It is the first time I can recall that a resolution passed by the Senate was not followed by a committee of the Senate. I urged members of the committee to complete their work, but without success. I decided to put down resolution after resolution on the Order Paper until there could be some closure and conclusion to this matter. I was pleased some years ago that the UN would use those very resolutions to hold a one-day conference on anti-Semitism, the first of its kind at the UN. I was delighted when the British Parliament did a landmark study on this topic several years ago and published it. I am pleased that, finally, parliamentarians on the other side, under the leadership of Mario Silva and Scott Reid, are holding hearings on combating anti-Semitism. I live in hope that the Senate will consider its findings and add its considerable expertise and credit to its recommendations.

I have learned two things about this topic, "anti-Semitism," the oldest of all prejudices. First, that discrimination starts with Jews, but never ends with Jews, as one great Danish Prime Minister once said. Second, what to do? Education is the answer. The Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel said these words at the Berlin conference: "You can teach a child to love or you can teach a child to hate." So education is an answer. A word about Senator Di Nino: I admire very much his work with respect to human rights not only at the OSCE but also with respect to the Dalai Lama. He has been a great and compatible companion at the OSCE, and he will continue to do great and important work over there. My congratulations to him.

Senators, I am coming to the close, but before I end, I would like to say a word about the current atmosphere in the Senate that I dislike. While I am as partisan—as everyone knows—as any senator, and will vigorously attack on behalf of my party and on behalf of my principles, I also believe in political companionship and congeniality that rises above partisan politics. I do not enjoy those who downgrade the Senate, the institution we are all privileged and summoned to serve. I have made good friends on both sides of the aisle here and in the other place. I take my leave of this hallowed hall with no regrets. I